

Message Text

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16

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 SSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09

H-02 INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SS-14 USIA-12 IO-12 AID-20 OMB-01 RSR-01 /137 W

----- 080955

R 170700 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9117

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

CINCPAC

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINT, BG

SUBJECT: NEW BANGLADESH CABINET

SUMMARY: NEW BDG CABINET INCLUDES ALL BUT THREE MEMBERS OF OLD CABINET, AND ONLY ONE NEW MEMBER. SEVERAL PORTFOLIOS REALLOCATED, WITH DR. KAMAL HOSSAIN NEW FONMIN.

1. NEW BDG CABINET SWORN IN AFTERNOON MARCH 16 INCLUDED ALL BUT THREE MEMBERS OF FORMER CABINET AND ONE NEW FACE. DROPPED FROM CABINET, IN ADDITION TO AILING MOLLAH JALALUDDIN AHMED, WERE SHAMSUL HOQUE AND M. R. SIDDIQUI. BOTH WILL RECEIVE AMBASSADORSHIPS. NEW MEMBER IS FORMER AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN MANORANJAN DHAR, WHO RECEIVES LAW AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO.

2. WHILE SENIORITY OF CABINET MEMBERS LITTLE CHANGED, SOME MINISTRIES REALLOCATED. PRIME MINISTER HAS ADDED PLANNING PORTFOLIO TO THE THREE HE ALREADY HOLDS, DEFENSE, CABINET AFFAIRS AND ESTABLISHMENT AFFAIRS. FINMIN TAJUDDIN AHMED RECEIVES

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NEWLY CREATED JUTE MINISTRY. KAMARUZZAMAN MOVED TO SIDDIQUI'S TRADE AND COMMERCE MINISTRY AND RECEIVES NEW FOREIGN TRADE MINISTRY AS WELL. DR. KAMAL HOSSAIN REPLACES SAMAD AS FOREIGN MINISTER, AND SAMAD IN TURN REPLACES SHEIKH ABDUL AZIZ AS AGRICULTURE CHIEF. AZIZ TAKES OVER INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING MINISTRY, VACATED BY MIZANUR RAHMAN CHOWDHURY, WHO REPLACES KAMARUZZAMAN AS RELIEF- REHABILITATION MINISTER. ABDUL MALIK UKIL IS NOW HOME MINISTER, WHILE ABDUL MANNAN ASSUMES UKIL'S OLD HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING PORTFOLIO. MATIUR RAHMAN MOVES UP TO COOPERATIVES, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTRY, FORMERLY SHAMSUL HOQUE'S. WORKS MINISTRY WHICH MATIUR HELD IN LAST CABINET, NOW UNDER MOHAMMED SOHRAB HOSSAIN; ABDUR RAB SERNIABAT HAS ASSUMED MOSSAIN'S OLD FOREST, FISHERIES AND LIVESTOCK MINISTRY IN ADDITION TO HIS LAND ADMINISTRATION AND LAND REFORM POST. JALALUDDIN'S POSTS TELEGRAPHS AND TELEPHONES MINISTRY HAS BEEN ADDED TO GENERAL OSMANI'S SHIPPING, INLAND, WATER TRANSPORT AND CIVIL AVIATION MINISTRIES. DR. MAFIZ CHOWDHURY'S MINISTRY EXPANDED TO INCLUDE ATOMIC ENERGY. NO CHANGES IN MINISTRIES LED BY SYED NAZRUL ISLAM, MANSOOR ALI, MUSHTAQUE AHMED, YUSUF ALI, ZAHUR AHMED CHOWDHURY OR PHANI MAJUMDER. MUJIB'S POLITICAL SECRETARY, TOFAIL AHMED, RETAINS JOB BUT NOW RANKS AS MINISTER OF STATE.

3. COMMENT: DACCA RUMOR MILL PREDICTED NEW CABINET WOULD BE SMALLER THAN OLDDONEWITH BASIC CHANGES IN ALLOCATION OF PORTFOLIOS. MUJIB HAS OPTED INSTEAD FOR AS LITTLE CHANGE AS POSSIBLE, DROPPING ONLY MINISTERS WHOSE INCOMPETENCE-- AND IN SIDDIQUI'S CASE WIDELY RUMORED DISHONESTY-- COULD NOT BE CONCEALED AND MAKING SHIFTS OF PORTFOLIOS ONLY AS NECESSARY TO FILL VACATED MINISTRIES OR REMOVE LESS ABLE MINISTERS FROM POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY. MAIN CONSIDERATION IN ALLOCATION OR PORTFOLIOS APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SENIORITY. ONLY NOTABLE EXCEPTION IS APPOINTMENT OF OXFORD LAWYER KAMAL HOSSAIN AS FOREIGN MINISTER. MIZAN'S REPLACEMENT OF KAMARUZZ ZAMAN MARKS HIM AS MAN OF INFLUENCE, JUST AS DEMOTION OF AZIZ SHOWS HIM TO BE RELATIVELY LOW RANKING. MANNAN'S DEPARTURE FROM HOME MINISTRY RESULTS FROM HIS LACK OF ABILITY; WERE HE NOT SOLE AWAMI LEAGUER OF STATURE FROM TANGAIL DISTRICT, HE MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN DROPPED ALTOGETHER. CABINET NOW CONTAINS TWO HINDUS.

NEWBERRY

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: worrelsw
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973DACCA01186
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730331/aaaahxwx.tel
Line Count: 118
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: worrelsw
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25-Jul-2001 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <24-Aug-2001 by worrelsw>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 971211
Subject: NEW BANGLADESH CABINET
TAGS: PINT, BG
To: NEA
SECSTATE WASHDC INFO CALCUTTA
CINCPAC
ISLAMABAD
LONDON
NEW DELHI
Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005